

June 28, 2002

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EAST STEENS MOUNTAIN FIRE CLOSURE IN EFFECT**

The U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced a regulated fire closure on public lands on the east side of Steens Mountain in Southeastern Oregon beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, June 30, 2002. The closure will be in effect until further notice. The BLM is concerned about the high potential of fires in the area with current conditions and the recent history of large, fast-moving fires and an abundance of highly flammable fuels this year. Harney County residents will recall the Stonehouse and Sheepshead fire complexes which burned over 50,000 acres in the area last summer.

Lands affected contain important bighorn sheep, mule deer, antelope, elk, and upland bird habitat, and are very steep and subject to extremely fast down-slope winds, making fire fighting very difficult and dangerous. Annual vegetation is already curing and the onset of hot, dry summer weather is quickly depleting fuel moisture, moving fire danger toward extreme levels.

Specifically, the regulated fire closure prohibits the following acts on affected lands;

1. Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire or stove fire, including charcoal briquette fire (43CFR 9212.2),  
NOTE: Liquefied and bottled gas stoves and heaters are permitted provided they are used within an area at least ten (10) feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.
2. Smoking while traveling in timber, brush, or grass areas, except in vehicles on roads, on barren areas or cleared areas at least three (3) feet in diameter, or on boats on rivers or lakes (43 CFR 9212.2).

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3. Operating any type of motorized vehicle off developed roadways. Parking of vehicles on roadways must be done in an area barren of flammable materials (43CFR 9212.2(b)(1)).

NOTE: Developed roadways are those that are clear of flammable debris, berm to berm.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 9212.3(a), the following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Persons with a permit specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer or a member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of official duty.

Affected lands are identified as public lands within the Burns District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from Highway 78 and East Steens Road, southwest along the crest of Steens Mountain and along the crest of the Pueblo Mountains to the Oregon/Nevada border, and following the Burns District boundary east and north until it reaches the East Steens Road at Highway 78.

**For further information on the closure, call the Burns Interagency Communication Center (BICC) at (541) 573-4545, weekdays between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.**

\*\*\*\*\***TO REPORT WILDFIRES, CALL (541) 573-**

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